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would suggest for the consideration of the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education the following partial improvement in the method of requests for desk copies:

1. All requests for desk copies to be sent to the publishers only by the deans of colleges, and not directly by individual teachers or heads of departments. This would insure more justice, uniformity and dignity.

2. All free copies to remain the permanent property of the college, and not of individual teachers. This will reduce the number of requests to a reasonable amount.

3. Whenever possible, teachers and colleges ought to purchase books and avoid asking for complimentary copies.

V. KARAPETOFF

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Melanesians and Polynesians; Their Life Histories Described and Compared. By GEORGE BROWN, D.D. London, MacMillan & Co. 1910. Pp. 451, 70 illustrations. Price, \$3.00.

The work is a comparative study of two groups of mankind generally supposed to have next to nothing in common. The relationship of these groups, however, has been maintained by some students since the epoch-making explorations of Wallace, who considered the Pacific peoples as variants of one race. Mr. Brown's theory, based principally on the languages concerned, in which he is an authority, is that a Negrito substratum formerly occupied the East Indies as far west as Borneo, also the continental skirts, and this stock became diluted by infusion of blood from India. Later the pressure of Malay tribes drove them out into the Pacific, the Polynesians having the greatest admixture of a light brown stock drifting to some point of radiation, perhaps Manua of the Samoan group, and the Melanesians, retaining more of the blood of the original black inhabitants, dispersed to the islands where they live at present. The Melanesians are thus regarded as the older, less commingled stock.

His long residence in New Britain and

Samoa and his command of the native languages fit Mr. Brown especially for the work and his opinions are entitled to great respect. The intention to establish by comparison the cultural affiliation of the dusky and fair-brown peoples has produced a most interesting and valuable body of observations charmingly presented in clear English, not only a contribution to science in the way of an almost unique comparative study, but a non-controversial book well worth reading for general information.

WALTER HOUGH

Herpetology of Missouri. By JULIUS HURTER, SR., Curator, Academy of Science of St. Louis, Mo. Pp. 215; 12 pl. relating to structural characteristics.

There have been various *resumés* of the fauna of states, these publications of more or less economic value, but it is genuinely pleasing to note the appearance of the present work in which it is evident throughout that the author has devoted much labor and time in presenting a detailed and practical review. A publication like this stands as a fine example of what should be forthcoming from other workers on local fauna. Carefully systematized it also treats those economic features which greatly enlarge the field of usefulness. Too many of our local scientific workers devote a great amount of time and space to the treatment of synonyms, forgetting that this phase of their subject is of absolutely no interest to the great mass of readers, eagerly awaiting the zoological history of their home territory.

The farmer, the natural science teacher and the younger student will find Mr. Hurter's work of immediate and practical interest, while the technical descriptions are sufficiently elaborate to properly identify any of the species. There is a series of well-prepared plates relating to the mouth characters of salamanders and frogs, the foot characters of the latter, the scalation of serpents and like characters.

Looking through the systematic arrangement, one notes several apparently recent